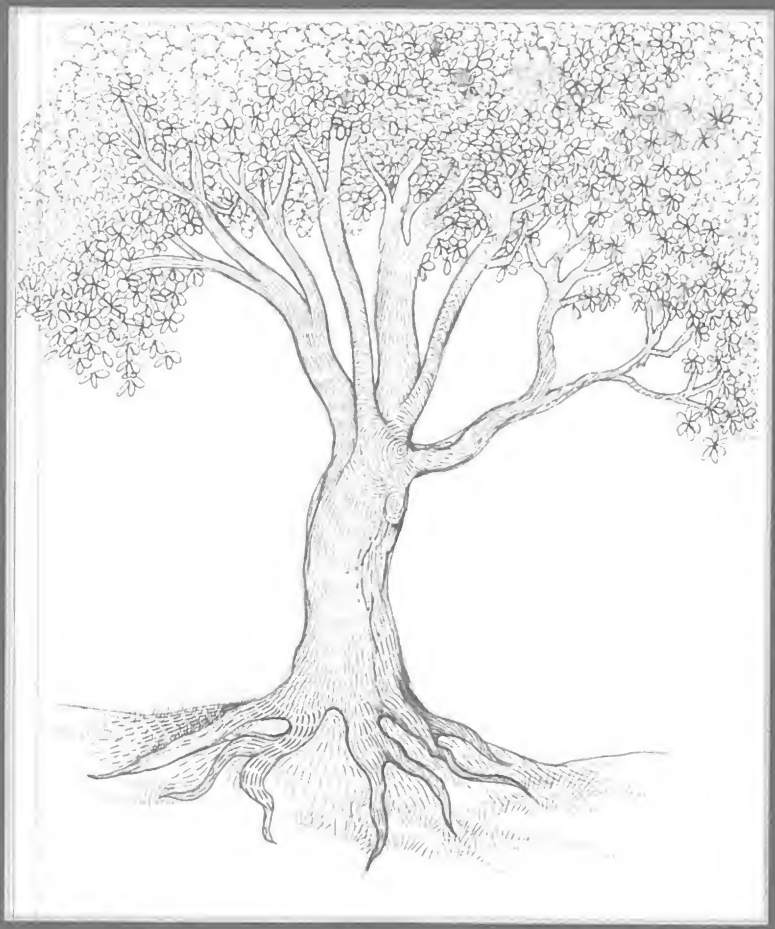
THE ROOTS OF PENDLE HILL



CAROL R. MURPHY

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A Fiftieth Anniversary Publication

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PREFATORY NOTE

This is essentially the first three chapters of a history of Pendle Hill up to 1950, written at the urging of Anna Brinton while the author was in residence. Pendle Hill was the first place to which Carol Murphy turned to nurture her renewed religious faith, and it was there that her writing ability found recognition. She drew on the Pendle Hill files and on the helpful advice and recollections of Joseph Platt, Douglas Steere, Justice Williams, Howard and Anna Brinton, John Forbes, Anna Broomell and various staff members then at Pendle Hill.

PROLOGUE

WHEN YOU COME TO PENDLE HILL, you approach its buildings by a tree-lined drive, past the Director's house to the home-like colonial style building where most of its life is centered. If you know that this is a school for social and religious studies you may be surprised to see some students playing tennis or working in the vegetable gardens at a time when other schools are holding classes. But it may happen that just as you conclude the students have forgotten their more unworldly interests, you hear someone calling—as was once recorded in the Pendle Hill log book—"Give me just five minutes. I want to discuss reincarnation!"

If the kitchen door stands open, you may look in to see large pots full of the coming meal steaming on the large black stove. Or you may find several students making bread, and carrying on an animated, if not always mutually intelligible, conversation in the only language that they have in common, English spoken, perhaps, in the accents of Costa Rica, Japan, and Austria.

After the students have all gathered for class, and you have lent a hand with washing the lunch dishes you wander over to the terrace of Firbank. Standing where you can look over the lowlands falling away from this height, and glimpse in the horizon some of New Jersey across the river, you think on your vision of the people that has been gathered in this place, and wonder what brought them, what work they are doing, and what common purpose binds them together in such fellowship.

I: A CHALLENGE AND AN ANSWER

THE BEGINNINGS of the idea of Pendle Hill as an educational center sponsored by Friends lie in the response of the Society of Friends to scientific skepticism and modern Biblical scholarship. The Friends, as inheritors of a tradition of seeking the spirit beyond the letter of scripture, had a sense of the reality of religious experience which could be expected to meet the challenge of the skeptics. In the course of the nineteenth century scientific thought was forcing religion to return to its roots and realize freshly its own ultimate truth.

However, few Quakers of the nineteenth century were impassioned mystics or prophets. Often their mysticism was placid, and their passion "evangelical" in the narrow, sectarian sense. Occupied with this tension between a traditionalism of their own and the impact of Protestant orthodoxies, they did not always or everywhere give a clear answer to the challenge of scientific thought, including the newer Biblical criticism.

In England and in America the more fearless minds among Quakers saw that adult education was one principal way in which Friends could be better equipped to face the doubts and questionings of the times. Since the seventeenth century,when George Fox had recommended to the Friends the founding of schools where "all things civil and useful in creation" could be taught, a tradition of Quaker education had been established.

The Quaker schools, as Howard Brinton pointed out, have been ideally communities which by their way of life prepared

for society as it should be, for a life conforming not to "the world," but to the Society of Friends, wherein Friends tried to live more in simplicity and more in the spirit of love than worldly society did. Though called "a religiously guarded education," Quaker schools were among the first to introduce practical and scientific studies. This tradition of both spirituality and experimental practicality was the background of the adult education movement which next developed.

In England the suggestion for an adult educational center was brought into a conference of some prominent Quaker thinkers held at Manchester in 1895. One of the leading spirits in this Conference was a younger friend, John Wilhelm Rowntree, who had already visualized a Quaker college in his essay, "A Plea for a Quaker Settlement," proposing "a Wayside Inn, a place where the dusty traveller, stepping aside for the moment from the thronged highway, shall find refreshment and repose. . . ."

The first step toward the realization of this ideal was a series of Summer Schools, beginning in 1897 with one held at Scarborough. The courses were mainly Biblical, with the purpose of explaining the results of modern Biblical scholarship. Many conservative Friends had qualms about these courses, but those who attended had their faith revitalized rather than destroyed.

These Summer Schools engaged the interest of George Cadbury, a wealthy Friend of Birmingham, who had a concern for better training for the ministry. He shared his views with John Wilhelm Rowntree, and joined in the efforts to establish a permanent training center, in spite of the fears of some Friends that this was a plot to establish a theological seminary. Finally George Cadbury offered Woodbrooke, an old family residence near Birmingham, as the site of such a permanent school for an experimental period of one year, as well as funds for a lectureship. This offer was gratefully accepted and a Woodbrooke Committee made plans for the school, which opened in

1903. They invited a distinguished Biblical scholar and Friend, Dr. J. Rendel Harris, to be Director of Studies. Rendel Harris declined a call to the Chair of Early Christian Literature at the University of Leyden to accept the Woodbrooke appointment. Woodbrooke proved to be successful. It appealed to an ever-widening circle, including foreign students and non-Friends. Its activities came to include extension courses and lectures, especially the annual Swarthmore Lecture.

The growth of Quaker training for religious leadership was thus fairly straightforward in England; in America several experiments were made, each contributing something of value to the final result. The American Quakers faced the additional problem that their diversities of opinion had led to actual separations among the body of Friends which resulted in loss of contact and opportunity to share and reconcile their insights. In the 1890's, about the time of the Manchester Conference in England, Rufus Jones set himself the task of bringing about a better understanding between Eastern "conservative" Friends and the more evangelical Western "pastoral" Friends, and reconciling the backward elements of both to the advances of modern science and scholarship.

As editor first of the *Friends' Review* and then of the *American Friend,* he pleaded with and challenged his readers. In 1905, he wrote:

> The Christian world is in the midst of a religious movement, fully as important to humanity as the Lutheran Reformation of the 16th Century. . . . It is a movement to set the soul free from the tyranny of superstition and tradition and to bring it into living obedience to the Divine Spirit. . . . Have we, awake and clad in the armor of light, been shaping the march of humanity? Far from it. Few Friends have taken any serious pains to understand the significance of this fresh message. . . . There are so far few more weak and pitiable chapters in our Quaker literature than the ones which have been written against present day thought. They are so full of errors that they convince no man of intelligence. . . .

Rufus Jones and his friends watched the English Summer School movement with interest and were eager to import the idea to America. Dr. George A. Barton, Professor of Biblical Literature at Bryn Mawr, worked with Rufus Jones in arranging for the first such school held at Haverford College in the summer of 1900 through the friendly co-operation of Haverford's president, Isaac Sharpless. Rufus Jones himself gave five lectures entitled "A Dynamic Faith." Attendance was large, especially for the evening lectures, and the fearless discussion of the main issues of religious thought had a quickening effect on many minds.

Similar summer schools were held in even years, usually at Haverford. They continued to deal with such subjects as evolution, Biblical criticism, and psychology of religion. Lectures on social questions were given by such men as Walter Raushenbush, churchman and leader in the social gospel movement. After 1923 these schools merged with those sponsored by the Friends General Conference, which at the instance of Henry W. Wilbur, had been held at George School and Swarthmore since 1907. Wilbur, a leading spirit in the Conference, worked not only for the summer school program but also had an active interest in the plans for the opening of Woolman School. Later these summer schools were superseded by the summer sessions of Woolman.

Meanwhile a more purely intellectual enterprise was being undertaken at Haverford College. T. Wistar Brown, who had been a member of the Haverford Board for sixty-three years at the time of his death in 1916, was interested in fostering religious studies. Among a number of his gifts to the College, the greatest was an accumulating trust fund, a memorial to his father Moses Brown, to be used for graduate study in the fields of Biblical literature, philosophy, psychology, and history. The college set up a small Graduate School in 1917 with Isaac Sharpless as Dean. The Director of Studies for most of the School's life was Elihu Grant, a Biblical scholar of the first

rank. Scholarships were offered to young Friends to attract students. In 1927 it was decided to end the separate existence of the Graduate School. The funds would be used for eight graduate scholarships of six hundred dollars each, and it long contributed to Pendle Hill in the shape of young men holding the T. Wistar Brown scholarships who sometimes lived at Pendle Hill while pursuing their studies at Haverford.

II: WOOLMAN SCHOOL

WOOLMAN SCHOOL, the direct ancestor of Pendle Hill, was born as a concern of the Advancement Committee of the Friends General Conference. This concern was for a longer course of training for religious workers than could be provided in short summer schools. In January of 1914 the committee made a minute to look into the possibilities and advisability of a plan for a longer and more carefully arranged course of study for interested young people preparing for religious and social work.

It was decided to establish a school under the care of the Advancement Committee, located in Swarthmore, where a three-story stone house was bought by William and Emma Bancroft for the use of the school, with the understanding that Swarthmore College would later be interested to take over the house. The name of Woolman was chosen for the school as "least likely to limit the usefulness to one branch of the Society of Friends."

The School opened in January of 1915 with a two day conference, to which thirty-eight Monthly Meetings sent representatives. Among the speakers were President Joseph Swain of Swarthmore College, and Swarthmore professors William I. Hull and Jesse H. Holmes. Immediately after this the regular school session opened, with William and Hannah

Hull as host and hostess, and Dr. Bird T. Baldwin as Director of Instruction. Eleven students, mostly women, were taught courses on the Bible, Quakerism, religious education, psychology, and social welfare and reform. Among the instructors were George A. Walton, William Byron Forbush, Paul Pearson, Dr. O. Edward Janney, and Louis N. Robinson.

In the next year extension courses were given, with an enrollment of about two hundred, and there was growth in the idea of "Meeting scholarships" by which members of various meetings were enabled to attend the School.

Three terms a year were planned. A summer session was first held in 1917. The students' daily schedule included morning devotions, and classes in the morning and the late afternoon.

In 1917 the Advancement Committee sought for ways to have the School serve a wider group than one branch of Friends. Elbert Russell, whom they wished to have as Director, wanted the School to represent all branches of Friends. The Whittier Fellowship Committee, an informal group representing these branches, was asked to name a representative Board of Managers. This was done. The School was turned over to this Board in the summer of 1917, and steps taken to incorporate it. Among those named to the Board were three who were to serve both Woolman School and Pendle Hill continuously: Hannah Hull, Bernard Walton and Agnes Tierney.

In the fall of 1917, came fifteen trainees for reconstruction work with the American Friends Service Committee in France, thus setting a precedent for the later collaboration of the Service Committee with Pendle Hill.

A further link between the two Schools was the coming of Henry T. Hodgkin, later to become Pendle Hill's first Director, to speak on the Fellowship of Reconciliation at Woolman School in the summer of 1922.

At the close of the first three years of the School's existence,

a survey showed that there had been a total of seventy-two resident students and thirty-three day students. The problems of finding students and finding money remained acute for Woolman School, which had a deficit each year. An impression that the School was too closely identified with one group of Friends had much to do with this.

In the fall of 1923, Caroline G. Norment came as hostess, from four years of work for the A.F.S.C. in Germany and Russia. She was a graduate of Goucher College (1909), a member of Stony Run Meeting, and had taught at Friends School in Baltimore. She became Acting Director of Woolman School in 1924 when Elbert Russell went away on leave, and remained in that position during the rest of the School's existence, as Dr. Russell devoted more of his time to extension work and the A.F.S.C., finally resigning for a position at Duke University. When Caroline Norment resigned in 1927 after exhausting years as hostess, director, developer, publicist, and fund-raiser, the Woolman School Board minuted: "Her untiring devotion and her eager vision of the possibilities of the School have been a source of inspiration to the Board." Later she became Dean of Women at Antioch College, and in World War II managed refugee hostels in Nyack, N.Y. and Haverford, Pa. She died at age 84 in 1971.

The winter term of 1925, with seven students studying the Kingdom of God and Human Relationships, proved to be the last held at Swarthmore. The College wished to take over the house.

But Woolman School was not to be homeless. Mary W. Lippincott, owner of an estate in Wyncote, was led to offer the School a new home after a conversation with the English Friend, Joan Mary Fry, in which Mary Lippincott asked her what were the great tasks confronting Quakers. Joan Fry replied that racial and economic relations were the most challenging problems, and that she thought Woolman School was attempting to face these. In a letter to Paul Furnas written

in the summer of 1925 Joan Fry gives her appreciative view of Woolman School in more detail:

> Just because we, Friends, consider that it is not the absence of differences, but the power to reconcile them, which constitutes the secret of the peacemaker, it is clear that the kind of training that we need is one which embraces as many varieties of experiences as possible. . . . It (Woolman School) strikes me as like our Woodbrooke, and yet different, giving a pleasing sense of the freshness of Friends' efforts, which do not need to be just copies of one another.

Not long after her talk with Joan Fry, Mary Lippincott offered her estate to Woolman School. "Rabbit Hill" was an imposing eighteen room stone mansion set in twelve handsome acres of lawn. The gift also included the sum of ten thousand dollars as the nucleus of an endowment. Those in charge of Woolman School had high hopes of a "bigger and better" future School in this more spacious location. Their hopes were somewhat borne out by the large summer session of 1925, the last session held at Swarthmore. As the two household employees could not do the work of a community of twenty, co-operative work by the students was introduced for the first time, and was continued as an element in Woolman School's group life.

Thus ended the Swarthmore life of Woolman School—the life of a small and intimate group, calling themselves "the little Woolmans," predominantly feminine, whose innocent diversions included tea parties, trips to the circus in Philadelphia, poetry readings around the fireplace, and a traditional pilgrimage to a large beech tree in the Crum Creek woods called the "Woolman tree," where they carved their class dates.

The move to larger quarters seemed to open a door for future expansion and greater responsibilities. It was hoped that a location removed from the shadow of Swarthmore College would be an indication of the School's usefulness to all branches of Friends.

Nevertheless, the move was not without its dangers, as

some cautious minds recognized. A larger budget was needed for maintenance. Since a correspondingly larger endowment was not raised, the officials of the School had to spend much time and energy in the endless search for contributions and scholarships. The latter were necessary because, though the endeavor to find and interest more students in other parts of the country was to some degree successful, these students were seldom able to pay their own way. Far from helping to support the School, they increased the drain on those who were interested in it. Furthermore, at Wyncote the School found it was no longer conveniently located near the library and teaching facilities of Swarthmore College, which had been so helpful to it.

Between its move to Wyncote, and its closing after the summer of 1927, the School held one winter term in 1926, and two summer terms. A number of conferences also used the School's facilities. Some of the lecturers of these years were Elton Trueblood, Henry Cadbury, Benjamin Gerig, Hornell Hart, Alexander C. Purdy, and John William Graham.

By 1927 those in charge of Woolman School were beginning to have fears that it might cease to be. But if the School had to die, they hoped for a resurrection. Caroline Norment wrote to Paul Furnas, Chairman of the Board, in January: "We have got to get it quite freshly to the Society with a plan of a bigger thing than we are doing, rather than to go and attempt to get the Society to support the small thing that we have done." At a meeting of the Woolman School board in February, it was decided that "the time has come to widen out the School into a cooperative educational enterprise of all Friends. . . . We should indicate to others interested, such as the T. Wistar Brown Board at Haverford, that we are willing to throw in our lot with forward steps which may be agreed upon to provide a Quaker Educational Center adequate to the purpose, adequately staffed, and adequately financed."

Certainly the need for such a school was a real one and was

even more keenly felt than in earlier years. Carl Heath, here on a visit from England, gave a token of his faith in the mission of Woolman School when, after a debate on the possible end of the School, he slipped a note into Caroline Norment's hand bearing a quotation from Edward Johnson (1654): "The Lord Christ intends to achieve greater matters by this little handful than the world is aware of."

Caroline Norment summed up her feeling in a letter to Marion Longshore, a Board member:

> I think the need becomes more articulate. . . . I think it is in the time. Rufus Jones' conclusions from his around-the-world visits, Clement Biddle's deep concern for more awakening in the Society . . . and many other things as widely different as these two, seem to me to indicate that there is a tide which sets in this direction.
>
> Of course I think this is a part of the whole more articulate yearning of our time for a philosophy adequate to the facts of the world we live in, and a religious experience satisfying to the human spirit. . . . In this whole situation it seems to me Quakerism ought to be playing a very distinctive part.
>
> I hope it will not shock thee in any way if I say that sometimes it seems to me that Woolman School per se will probably have to die, that a bigger thing may be born. . . . I said to Delite Hollett yesterday, "Perhaps we have gone from the worm stage into the chrysalis and some day may come out a full-fledged moth with a beauty that is as yet unsuspected."

To meet this crying need, Alexander Purdy, one of the spiritual guides both of Woolman School and of Pendle Hill, thought that "We have to do two things at the same time, if we are even to grasp the problem of our common life today: *first,* see life as a whole and so envisaging it, avoid as we would the plague all fragmentary and easy solutions of its perplexities, all cheap successes and all immediate disappointments; *second,* see life in its specific, immediate, and hand-to-hand relationships. If anywhere, anybody, is trying to do those two things at once, holding them together in indissoluble wedlock, we who

yearn for the Kingdom of God ought to lend them our support, material and spiritual. It is because Woolman School is seeking to do just this with no little promise of success that I believe in its future."

How well did the School perform this task? Many of the students testified to the broadened understanding, deeper appreciation of Quakerism, and spiritual inspiration they received, as well as more practical benefit such as greater ease in self-expression, and better knowledge of teaching methods. One of the highest tributes came from Yone Murayama, a Japanese graduate of Wellesley, who wrote in 1926: "You have surely given warmth of life and vital feeling to many ideas which existed merely intellectually in my mind before. . . . I have learned a sense of value in life which was not clear at all to me. . . .You have given me a key, which I have lost sight of many years, to open the door between spontaneous enjoyment and conscientious effort and control, and to find a unity between them. I am happy to rediscover myself."

Yet Woolman School had faults and met obstacles which brought about its decline. One obstacle was a lack of interest in the School and in attending it. Sometimes this came from lack of understanding of and sympathy with the School, due to religious conservatism, such as that displayed by a man in the Bible class of a North Carolina Friends pastor, who objected to the pastor's rendering "charity" in I Corinthians 13 as "love," saying, "If I permit your changing that one word, you will change the whole Bible. No sir, I won't stand for it." Economic conservatism also played a part.

But to some, the principal difficulty lay in the curriculum. Esther S. Dunham, a lecturer at the school, declared, "It is here where we find our difficulties. Is the purpose of the school to provide opportunity for groups to seek to apply the way of love to racial and international problems, or to train teachers of first-day school classes? Is it possible for a small school to do more than one thing well . . .?" Clarence Pickett

thought that the Woolman School atmosphere needed to be united to more scholarly studies.

Such was the promise and such the weakness of Woolman School when it closed its doors forever after the summer session of 1927. The comparatively large number (twenty-one) of interested students that attended showed the need; the deficit of five thousand dollars was a symptom both of the failure of many to appreciate this need and of the failure of Woolman School to speak clearly enough to it.

But even before Woolman closed, plans were being laid for a school that would be larger, more representative of all Friends, and more intensive in its scholarship. "Oh, Paul, my friend," wrote Caroline Norment to Paul Furnas in this last summer of the School, "we cannot let this thing die. There is light ahead if we know how to go after it."

III: THE FOUNDING OF PENDLE HILL

WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT that Woolman School could no longer continue as it was, many Friends felt the concern to provide for some way in which the good work might go on. A conference was called by J. Henry Bartlett, Clement M. Biddle, John S. C. Harvey, Rufus M. Jones, Francis R. Taylor, and George A. Walton. The call spoke of the need for a school to "afford a base for experiment in the application of our testimonies and for making fresh interpretation of Christian truth. . . . In America, Haverford Graduate School and Woolman School have been working at this task, but their accomplishment has so far been inadequate. The Graduate School is now being discontinued in its present form, and Woolman School, while it sees more clearly than ever the need and the opportunity, sees clearly too, that it is not in its present form sufficient to the performance of the task."

The conference met in the Haverford Meeting House on June 20th, 1927, and was, according to Agnes Tierney (writing in the *Friends Intelligencer*), "one of the most representative of the gatherings of Friends of all branches and localities ever held in Philadelphia. . . ." Agnes Tierney presided; speakers were President Comfort of Haverford, Paul Furnas, Alexander Purdy, and Henry Cadbury. A continuation committee was appointed, consisting of William Eves III, chairman, Henry J. Cadbury, Wilbur K. Thomas, Elizabeth Walter Furnas, and Alexander C. Purdy.

From their deliberations they concluded that "there is need for an educational center in which a type of special study and research can be carried on which is not done at present in our existing Quaker educational institutions. At the same time, this new center can and should stimulate Quaker thought and life in our present schools and colleges through cooperation and contacts of many kinds. The center should provide accommodations so that the students can live together who desire to make a study of the application of Christianity to life, as interpreted by the Society of Friends, and, while making this study, to practise these applications in so far as is possible through their contacts with each other. . . . Furthermore, the center should be quite free from the usual academic organization. . . ."

A certain amount of affiliation and cooperation with colleges was envisaged, insofar as compatible with the experimental nature of the curriculum. "The geographical location of the school will have to be determined with a view to making possible both such affiliation and such independence as have been mentioned above." The curriculum might include courses on religious subjects, religious education, and the application of Christian ethics to social, industrial, and international problems. "The resident faculty would include at least two full time instructors, one of whom would be director of studies, and a hostess. There should also be a director of

extension. . . . The extension work of the center would probably develop into a most important part of the plan." In conclusion, the Committee felt that it was necessary to obtain the spiritual and financial backing of the Society of Friends, not just a small group of interested members. "Therefore the first step in procedure is to ascertain if the plan outlined is supported by a sufficient group of Friends to guarantee success."

This report was given in November to a second meeting of the conference that had been held at Haverford. At this meeting Joseph E. Platt was appointed to act as organizing secretary, thus beginning his indefatigable labors to bring the new school into being.

The plan suggested, although actually a forecast of the final outcome, did not receive definite enough support to assure its carrying out at that time. Hence some of the later planning was apparently on a much more modest scale. At the Cape May Conference of the summer of 1928 Joseph Platt outlined a "new plan for Woolman School, whereby a hostel could be maintained in or near Philadelphia," where students would live, taking courses at the nearby colleges.

But whatever the plan might be, the selection of an inspiring leader to direct the school in its formative years was vital. On July 17th, five men met at Gwynedd, Pennsylvania. These men were: Joseph Platt, Wilbur K. Thomas, Alexander C. Purdy, Clarence E. Pickett, and J. Bernard Walton. They discussed the choice of a director, and after considering a number of available English and American Friends, put the name of Henry T. Hodgkin at the head of their list.

Who was this man who had such an eminent place in these plans? Henry Hodgkin was born in 1877 of a Quaker family in Darlington in the North of England. His parents had strong evangelical interests. He studied medicine, a scientific discipline which helped him to outgrow the rigidity of his childhood religion, but which never shook his faith in God. Henry

Hodgkin went as a missionary to China; was Secretary of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association and one of the founders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He was the author of *Lay Religion, Personality and Progress, The Christian Revolution,* and other books. He traveled and lectured extensively in China, and became a secretary of the National Christian Council in China. Here he had to encounter and deal sympathetically with many competing currents of thought; a narrow fundamentalism that imperilled the success of missionary work, the skeptical and non-religious teachings of such men as Bertrand Russell and John Dewey who were also lecturing in China, the humanism of Dr. Hu Shih, and last but not least, communism.

In July 1928 he received a letter from Wilbur K. Thomas asking him if he would be the Director of Studies of the new school. The idea appealed to him. According to his biographer, H. G. Wood, Henry Hodgkin was interested primarily in students and young people, and he was eager for work which would bring him into closer personal contact with smaller groups. He also felt that Friends needed a larger number of better equipped Friends to deliver the message of Quakerism. Furthermore, he was attracted to America. "Years ago," wrote Wood in *Henry T. Hodgkin: A Memoir,* "it had crossed his mind that he might have some service in America. He loved the country. He liked the pioneer spirit of the American people. He knew a good deal of the problems and possibilities alike of the nation and of the Society of Friends. He had many close friends in the States, and he had constantly worked with Americans."

Nevertheless his first reply on receipt of the invitation was to say that he and his wife Joy had not reached a final decision. He wanted first to be sure that his services were not needed by English Friends, and he also wanted if possible to have a home of his own for the sake of his children. He enclosed a memorandum embodying his ideas concerning the new school.

He thought of the "Woodbrooke in America" as serving the Society of Friends by developing the meeting for worship and the ministry, working out educational policy, and developing the wider service of Friends, both in America and abroad. It would train prospective missionaries in understanding of the mission countries and the native churches there. Training in international relations would be important: "No student should pass out from the institution without a really international point of view and the power to think into the points of view of nations other than his own." The school should also be closely related to the labor movement, and concern itself with labor education and the spread of democracy in industry. Educationally, the standard of teaching should be high, and "thorough knowledge and fearless facing of all facts should be assumed as the foundation for every line of study. Chief emphasis must be laid on the development of a deep and sane devotional spirit . . .," and a spirit of fellowship must prevail.

On November 2nd Henry Hodgkin, perhaps convinced by his own planning, sent a brief cable: "Accept—Hodgkin," which greatly rejoiced the hearts of the American planners. On November 8th the Board of Managers of Woolman School met to appoint a nominating committee who should select a group to serve as nucleus to complete a new school organization.

This nominating committee named the following to the nucleus group: Henry J. Cadbury, Elizabeth Furnas, Edith S. Platt, Joseph Platt, Grace Rhoads, Wilbur K. Thomas, Agnes Tierney, James Vail, Bernard Walton and Frank D. Watson. These decided that the new enterprise should have a small Board, with some committees whose members need not be on the general Board.

Now that the new school had a Director and the nucleus of a Board, there remained the problems of name, location, and curriculum. The character of the instruction to be offered was one of the knottiest of the problems. Some of the interested young Friends who were consulted felt that the greatest need

was for courses for which credit could be obtained. But this demand was not easily reconciled with the plans for an experimental, non-academic, and not over-specialized course of study which would not be a redundant repetition of graduate school offerings. It was on the whole considered more feasible to have students take degree work at neighboring colleges rather than ask the colleges to grant credit for courses at the school, unless perhaps a theological seminary would consider giving credit for a year of intensive Quaker study. Many felt that the new school should not become merely an appendage of one of the colleges. Another suggestion was that the new center might cooperate with Friends' schools in training teachers, or in doing research on the religious education problems of the schools. Other concerns of a specialized nature were the need for preparing adequate Meeting leadership, and scientific research in religious psychology. Fortunately, the new school was not committed to so specialized a plan that its natural development was restricted to any one narrow channel.

No decision was reached at this time regarding a name. Some suggestions were brought forward, including the name "Pendle Hill."

Housing plans were modest at this time. A Hostel Committee suggested using the facilities of the meeting houses in Lansdowne. Students could live in various Friends' houses, perhaps the Platts could rent a large house with rooms for some students, or perhaps a complete hostel could be maintained. It was felt that dinner together and an evening social room were the minimum necessities.

Meanwhile, Friends everywhere were being acquainted with the idea of the school. Joseph Platt visited Friends' colleges and found interest on the part of teachers and students.

In March 1929, Henry Hodgkin was able to make a brief trip to America. He arranged to meet those planning for the new school in a retreat (his favorite method of group deliberation) at Westtown, from March 15th to the 17th. They assembled

under a sense of the magnitude of the new venture. "We were stirred," wrote one of them, "by this dream of a new spiritual center as we've not been since the German child-feeding days of 1919-1920. Such as we have we give: we had, in those days, bread and flour and cocoa, and the ability to organize their distribution and so we gave. We haven't any overflowing abundance of spiritual food for the hungry sheep who look up and are not fed, and so we aren't giving it."

Henry Hodgkin outlined his ideals in a paper entitled "A Dream to Be Realized," later printed in the *Friends Intelligencer* (4/27/29). He asked what was the justification for another educational institution? ". . . For Friends there is no adequate provision of the kind desired . . ." but "I did not limit my dreams even to this important service. To me it seemed, from the very beginning that a door was being opened to a wider service." He then described four aspects of the school of his dream:

> *A Haven of Rest.* . . . Is there any need much greater than the need for peace—the deep quiet of the spirit wherein our roots go down into the spiritual subsoil and we find ourselves more truly in finding God? . . . There is a time for rapid work and quick decision; there is also a time for allowing the great silent forces of God and nature to do their own work in their own way. . . . Can our school preserve a place of quiet for students and staff alike? Can it do this without any unreality, any loss of the sense of a world's need, any repression of the instincts and enthusiasm of the young? . . .
>
> *A School of the Prophets.* . . . My dream is one of thoroughness along a few well chosen lines rather than a widely diffused teaching of many interesting topics. . . . The problem is how to develop sound scholarship so that it may strengthen and not diminish the sense of inspiration, how to create new deep and dynamic convictions while preserving openness to new truth and a spirit of wide tolerance. . . .
>
> *A Laboratory of Ideas.* . . . The laboratory method must be fearlessly applied to our religious work. What are men thinking about and interested in? . . . Moreover there should be opportunity to test ideas in practice. . . .

A Fellowship round Christ. The school we are thinking of is to be a true fellowship among staff and student and between staff and students. It is to be a fellowship in the quest for a higher life. . . . The school should create reconciling personalities who will derive from the smaller group convictions and experiences fitting them to serve large groups. . . . Our highest moments should be those when we come nearest to Christ and when his spirit most truly moves us to acts of love and self-renunciation, to overcome the inevitable frictions as our different personalities clash, to nerve to fresh endeavors in the fields of thought or action.

Those at the retreat agreed with his statement of ideals. Henry J. Cadbury reported, "We believe that the school can provide an atmosphere of fellowship arising out of a common life and a common quest for truth." They hoped that non-Friends would also be attracted to study or to teach there. A number expressed their vision of the need for and tasks of such a school. From notes of remarks made at the retreat may be taken these samples of the ideas that were voiced:

Vincent D. Nicholson: For the first time in the history of Quakerism it is possible to make this school the expression of certain seeking elements in all groups of the Society . . . I also feel that for the first time it has become a necessity. Every age is a changing age, but it is my opinion that things are taking place more rapidly in the realm of religion and of social relations than at any time in the history of the world, and those people in the community who are interested in the preservation and adoption of the higher life, have got to be about their business.

Grace E. Rhoads, Jr.: I don't think of this as a school solely for Friends, but for a group which is working together to serve the whole world, and particularly . . . groups which I have seen—the people who have lost faith through too much hardship. . . . Our message won't have any effect at all if we don't have any spirit to catch. . . . The open-minded attitude of search will mean more than the attitude that we have found something as a panacea for all ills.

Douglas Steere: I look forward to a day when the future teacher will be asked not "Have you a Ph.D.?" but "Have you

gotten some magnetizing enrichment of life that you can share with young people?''

Hornell Hart: If our proposal is to provide a vocational training which will assure to young people a safe professional opening, then I say we haven't anything to add to the institutions now in existence. If on the other hand we have prepared to call them to follow in the footsteps of the prophets we have an opportunity here which transcends the rational attitude.

I have wondered why we haven't taken up as part of the job of education the problem of how to assist the normal individual to have command of his emotional forces so that he may avoid conflict with himself. I have rather assumed that one of the essential functions of religion is its power to reorganize life in that fashion.

One interested listener, Homer Morris, put his reactions to the discussion into a letter in which he warned that ''the proposed school has little chance of success unless it does something distinctive and entirely different from what the other Friends colleges are doing and what is being done in existing graduate schools.'' He thought the school should entirely abandon formal courses and specialize in studying the human and spiritual problems every student must face, especially those who are losing faith in spiritual values and those who are struggling to work out the social implications for Jesus' ethics in a practical way.

Before sailing back to England Henry Hodgkin met with the Board to discuss certain practical steps preliminary to the opening of the school, which was set for the fall of 1930. Consultations with meetings and Friends colleges, and investigation of possible locations for the school were planned.

IV: PLANTING THE ROOTS

THINKING OVER his experiences as he sailed home on the Aquitania, Henry Hodgkin wrote:

> We are setting out to do something new. Even Woodbrooke with its rich experience and valued work is not to be simply repeated. . . .
>
> When you discover, as you surely will, my deficiencies and mistakes please continue this same confidence by speaking very frankly of them, remembering that for me, as for you, the success of our enterprise far outweighs any thought of personal gratification and the triumph of my own ideas. . . .
>
> Pondering on the question of name I still feel the value of a "neutral" name. The suggestion of "Pendle Hill" which I heard for the first time at the Board meeting rather appeals to me. For non-Friends it would take some "digging-out" and even for some Friends it is not too familiar. Its suggestion of the waiting harvest and the mount of vision is all to the good and it can be used without the word "school" or any similar defining word.

Henry Hodgkin returned again briefly in July; in the meantime financial matters had been considered. A budget of $12,000.00 for the first year was suggested, including a half-year's salary of $3,000.00 for the director. Twenty-five people selected as Co-operators would provide the funds. A purchaser was found for the Wyncote property of Woolman School. It was eventually sold for $80,000.00, money which would enable the new school to buy its home.

One very hot July day the Board and Henry Hodgkin met at the home of William C. Biddle in Lansdowne to examine

possible sites for the school. Henry Hodgkin wrote of the search for a location:

> An epic might be written describing the varied sites visited by the house hunters and the claims urged by those interested in one or another even to the discussion of the relative intelligence of the goldfish in James Biddle's pond at Wallingford and William Biddle's pool in Lansdowne! Enthusiasm ran high for one site only to discover that it had been withdrawn from the market; another proved to belong to a lady whose conviction as to its value bore no relation whatever to the condition of the real estate market; another house had almost been rented when it was whispered with bated breath that the local authorities had been making enquiries about the drains; in one a haunted room was spoken of, but whether it was an attraction to the Board or the reverse has never yet been discovered (Pendle Hill Log Book).

In discussing the site, some preferred Lansdowne as being more accessible, while Henry Hodgkin was in favor of Wallingford, as providing more room for expansion. It was also reported at this meeting that Woodbrooke had expressed its willingness to aid in any way possible. It was hoped that one or more American Friends could visit Woodbrooke at this time.

Henry Hodgkin again paid a visit to America in September and October. He did much traveling and visiting, but had time for another quiet retreat with the Board at Westtown in September. One point discussed at the retreat was the need for students of the highest intellectual capacity for the school. Others felt the school must not soar out of reach of the rank and file, and that it must begin with better preparation of the present Quaker workers, hoping not to miss the supermen. A curriculum for one year of study was outlined, to include courses in Quakerism, mysticism and philosophy of religion, application of Christianity to living problems, Bible, psychology and counselling, and religious education.

There was a stirring debate on the minimum requirements for the opening of the school. Henry Hodgkin called the group to a larger vision. He advised having three or four permanent

staff members instead of two, and accommodations for twenty-five students by the second or third year. "After considerable discussion," the minutes reported, "the group rose in majesty to meet his spirit and vision. . . . The retreat closed on a high note of dedication to the seemingly impossible but compelling task to which we felt committed."

At following Board meetings, there was encouraging news of generous donations for the first three years of the school. The larger plans also made the Board favorable to Wallingford as a suitable site. There was little progress in agreeing on a name. "While it provided considerable entertainment," it was reported, "no unanimous conviction resulted. Woolman School, Springhaven, Firbank, Ruscombe, and Pendle Hill were all considered. Pendle Hill, the mount of vision of George Fox, seemed to lead in the competition." The matter was finally referred to a committee of Henry Hodgkin, D. Robert Yarnall and Joseph E. Platt. This committee reported unanimously in favor of "Pendle Hill" at the next Board meeting on November 21st. The Board approved, and so the new venture had its own name at last.

As 1929 gave way to 1930, interest in the school increased. A number of those concerned in the project wrote short articles for the Friends' papers. S. Archibald Smith wrote: "There is need for a school that does not so much aim to explain life as to impart a reasonable and inspiring motive to live." Elton Trueblood called Pendle Hill a "training place for scouts, who can spy out the land and lead the whole body of Quakerdom into new applications of our fundamental principles."

In an editorial, *The Christian Century* hailed the coming of Henry Hodgkin to America with the words: "It will mean a great deal to have Dr. Hodgkin living here. Both in the tight little isle, where he was born, and in sprawling China, where he has spent so much of his active career, he has proved that it is impossible to have such a man around and not feel his influence. It will mean even more to have Dr. Hodgkin in

charge of the precise sort of school the Quakers have in mind."

Prospective students were already beginning to register: the first, Ann Silver, of Oregon, as early as December 12th, 1929. One student wrote: "I am tremendously interested in the formation of such a school. It seems to be just exactly the thing for which I have been seeking. . . . The whole plan appeals to me very strongly."

On February 23th, 1930 the Board of the old Woolman School turned over its assets to Pendle Hill, and merged the membership with the Board of the new enterprise. As the leading membership was nearly identical, this action merely confirmed in theory what was already a merger in practice. Steps were begun to make the necessary changes in the corporate charter so that it could be transferred to Pendle Hill.

The hunt for a location was reaching a climax. Henry Hodgkin wrote later: "Where could we find a home? What if the best place for a school should prove to lie in a valley? Could we sustain such a contradiction in terms?" In March came the news that a satisfactory site was found, and the finance committee was authorized to offer $75,000.00 for the Herman Wirz property near Wallingford, if the expense of converting the barn into a dormitory was not too great. Here Pendle Hill has been located since its opening in September, 1930.

The history of this pleasant hill-top property goes back to the days of William Penn, since it was part of a tract acquired by John Sharpless from William Penn before the latter left England in 1682. It was owned by only two other families for a period of more than 175 years, but with the opening of the railroad to Media in 1855 what had been farmland was divided into smaller lots. This particular eight acres was eventually bought by Waldron J. Cheney in 1859, who built a house identical with the Randolph house next door (now Firbank). The Cheney place was sold in 1867 and again in 1872 before it was bought by Mrs. James Spear in 1879. Mr. and Mrs. Spear

gave it the name "Almora" after a place in India with a fine outlook. After spending some summers there with their children, the Spears pulled down the Cheney house in 1888 and commissioned an architect, Addison Hutton,* to build a castellated mansion of yellow brick on the site.

This ambitious edifice was occupied by the Spear family for some years; but it was vacant by 1922, when, on the evening of January 24th, a fire of undetermined origin destroyed the house before the local fire companies could save it. That evening a group of five Woolman School students were visiting the Swarthmore College observatory when they heard the sirens wailing for the fire at the site of the James Spear house. The School Log records: "Since Ada Hunt had never seen a fire and the others were game, we crossed the railroad tressle (sic) and watched the fire for about an hour, returning by way of Strath Haven Inn. . . . The next afternoon we hiked over via the Plush Mills and inspected the ruins by daylight."

In November 1922 the ruins were bought by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Wirz, who built the present house. Designed by R. Brognard Okie of fieldstone in colonial style, it shows its architect's historical knowledge which was also demonstrated in his restoration of the Betsy Ross House, the recreation of Penn's Manor, and the reproduction of High Street for the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition. This building, with its fireplaces, quiet reading-room, and ample kitchen, has indeed been Pendle Hill's Main House. From its terrace, where meals are served in warm weather, one may see the numerous varieties of trees on the grounds, many of which are more than a hundred years old. They are largely specimen trees—that is, planted so they could grow and spread freely without interference.

If Main House contributed an element of "gracious living" at Pendle Hill, the Barn on the property, built in 1890, represented "simple living." At the time the purchasers inspected it they saw in the words of Joseph E. Platt "a spacious

*Grandfather of a later Pendle Hill Board member, Elizabeth Yarnall.

garage behind the big green doors. . . . Through the small sliding door we wandered into a horse-stable filled with cobwebs and piled to the roof with firewood." It was soon to be transformed at a cost of $20,000.00 into a meeting room, offices and dormitory space, though its interior brickwork and ponderous sliding doors still hint at its original function.

The Wirz property was purchased for $75,000.00 ($25,000.00 being the mortgage) in May 1930, and Pendle Hill took possession on June 1st. Henry Hodgkin reported, "Suffice it to say that at last the ideal site was discovered and no one has raised a doubt about it since we came to live here. We all know that this is 'IT.' "

And so the roots of Pendle Hill were firmly planted.

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A FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

WE TAKE SATISFACTION in presenting *The Roots of Pendle Hill* by Carol Murphy, who traces the creative process by which our Quaker study center came into being in 1930. In commemoration of that event the Board of Managers has designated 1978-1980 as a season of communication with all Pendle Hill alumni through visits, reunions, jubilees, and publications. One such publication is the above; another will be a history of our fifty years by Eleanore Price Mather, to be ready for distribution in 1980. In celebrating the lives of those many friends who have given life to Pendle Hill we enter our second half-century. For more information on coming events write Pendle Hill.

EDWIN A. SANDERS, *Clerk*

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